Exceptional Children Division

Autism Spectrum Disorder NC Policy Changes

Approved by the NC State Board of Education: September 5, 2019 for Implementation January 1, 2020.

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN DIVISION

Purpose of the Changes:

In order to improve <u>alignment of NC Policies</u> with <u>effective</u> <u>practices</u>, policy changes are needed in the evaluation and identification of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

4th Most Prevalent IDEA Classification in NC

Autism 11.1%

- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental Delay
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability 8.1%
- Multiple Disabilities

Orthopedic Impairment

Other Health Impairment

Specific Learning Disability 35.4%

Speech/Language Impairment

Traumatic Brain Injury

Visual Impairment

Serious Emotional Disability

17.5%

14.1%

The Goal

Community Providers

School Providers

Consistent Identification Practices

Outline:

Federal and State Definition

NC Screenings and Evaluations

NC Eligibility Criteria

Definition of Autism Spectrum Disorder (Federal and NC)

- A developmental disability that significantly affects verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and social interaction.
 - Adversely affects a child's educational performance.
 - Generally evident before age three.
- Other characteristics are engagement in repetitive activities, restricted interests, resistance to external changes, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.
- ASD does not apply if a child's educational performance is primarily affected by an emotional disability.

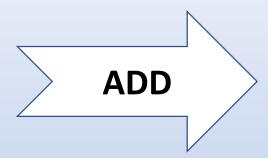
Observable Features of ASD

Persistent deficits in social communication and interaction

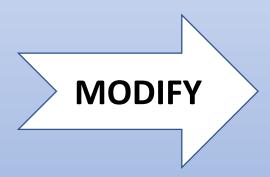
Restricted,
repetitive patterns
of behavior,
interests, or
activities

Symptoms present in the early developmental period

NC Required Screenings/Evaluations



- Motor screening
- Sensory processing evaluation



- Social/developmental history
- Psychological evaluation
- Behavioral assessment related to ASD

Added Definition: Behavioral Assessment Related to Autism Spectrum Disorder

An assessment conducted by trained and knowledgeable personnel using behavior rating tools measuring the range of characteristics associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder, yielding information of the child's functioning across environments. This assessment may also include individually administered instruments that assesses the range of characteristics associated with autism spectrum disorder.

Added Definition: Sensory Processing Evaluation

Sensory evaluations are performed by occupational therapists. A sensory processing evaluation collects, organizes, and analyzes information specific to how a student's current level of sensory processing impacts occupational performance and participation at school. This information may be gathered through: review of educational and medical records; interviews with the student, teachers, parents, and others; detailed, in-context observations; and, the administration of formal testing instruments, procedures, and techniques. A sensory processing evaluation should include, but is not limited to, as many of the areas listed below as may be appropriate:

- (i)intensity of response to various sensory experiences, including (a) visual stimuli (b) auditory stimuli (c) olfactory stimuli (d) tactile stimuli (e) taste stimuli (f) vestibular stimuli (g) proprioceptive stimuli
- (ii) sensory-motor coordination (a) sensory-motor skills (b) praxis/motor planning skills;



✓	Hearing screening
✓	Vision screening
	Motor screen
✓	Observation across settings, to assess academic and functional skills
✓	Summary of conference(s) with parents or documentation of attempts to conference with parents
MODIFIED	Social/developmental history; to include an examination of characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder present during the early developmental period
✓	Educational evaluation
✓	Adaptive behavior evaluation
MODIFIED	Psychological evaluation; the yielding of an overall intellectual score is not required and should be considered on a case-by-case basis
	Sensory processing evaluation
✓	Speech-language evaluation which includes, but is not limited to, measures of language semantics and pragmatics
MODIFIED	Behavioral assessment related to Autism Spectrum Disorder:

Eligibility Decisions

Prong 1: Meets Criteria

Prong 2: Adverse Effect

Prong 3:
Need for Specially
Designed
Instruction

Existing Eligibility Criteria for Prong 1

To be determined eligible, a child must demonstrate at least three of the four characteristics listed below:

- (A) Impairment in communication;
- (B) Impairment in social interaction;
- (C) Unusual response to sensory experiences;
- (D) Restricted, repetitive, or stereotypic patterns of behavior, interests, and/or activities.

New Criteria: Prong 1 Social Communication & Interaction

- (A) Impairment in communication;
- (B) Impairment in social interaction;

- Developing
- Maintaining
- Understanding

Social Emotional Reciprocity

Nonverbal Communicative Behaviors

Relationships

Deficits in all 3

Currently or by history



New Criteria: Prong 1

(C) Unusual response to sensory experiences;

(D) Restricted, repetitive, or stereotypic patterns of behavior, interests, and/or activities.

Restricted, Repetitive Patterns of Behavior, Interests, or Activities

1 or more Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects or speech

Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualized patterns of verbal or nonverbal behavior

Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus

Currently or by history

Atypical responses to sensory input or atypical interests in sensory aspects of the environment

New Criteria: Prong 1

Symptoms generally present in the early developmental period, but may not manifest until social demands exceed coping capacities or may be masked by learned strategies in later life. A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age three could be identified as having autism spectrum disorder if the criteria in (A) and (B) are satisfied.

Prong 2: Adverse Effect

The disability must: (A) Have an adverse effect on educational (academic and/or functional) performance.

Prong 3: Need for Specially Designed Instruction Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction- To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.

ASD Policy Implementation Timeline

9/2019 SBE Approval 9/2019 Begin Embedding Content into Existing Trainings 10/2019 presented at Autism Support Team Meetings

11/2019
Present at EC
Fall
Conference

















9/2019
presented at
Regional EC
Directors'
Meetings

9/2019 presented at Related Service Lead Meetings 10/2019 Guidance Document Complete 1/2020 Implementation of New Policy